

Arizona Anti-Meth Initiative

Overview

Arizona Statewide Anti-Meth Initiative Framework

The Governor's Office for Children, Youth and Families with funding from the Arizona Parents Commission have awarded funding to 22 Community Methamphetamine Coalitions for participation in an "Anti-Meth" Initiative focused on implementation of community-based environmental prevention strategies. The funding available for this initiative supports implementation of prevention and education activities related to the impact and consequences of methamphetamine use and production in local communities.

The Initiative includes a two-phase strategy:

Phase I: In year one, funding has been provided to support the development of coalitions (existing or new), to organize their coalition and communities may develop a community needs assessment. During this phase, technical assistance will be provided by the State.

Phase II: In years two and three, funding will be provided to support implementation of community based environmental prevention strategies as defined below. These will be competitive grants.

Environmental Prevention Strategies

What Are Environmental Prevention Strategies?¹

Environmental prevention strategies are prevention efforts that aim to change or influence community standards, institutions, structures, and attitudes that shape individuals' behaviors.

Environmental approaches have been used to:

- Change public perceptions and attitudes
- Improve and enforce laws and regulations
- Decrease the availability or access to harmful drugs
- Address other factors affecting public health and safety

To employ an environmental approach, it is necessary to work closely with a broad set of community systems, such as media, legal systems, and community based organizations.

Specific examples of environmental prevention strategies that have been implemented include:

1. Changes in pseudoephedrine laws / ordinances
2. Recognition of retailers that voluntarily place pseudoephedrine behind the counter
3. Targeted education in schools
4. Public Awareness Campaigns
5. Consistent enforcement of existing laws and regulations through compliance checks.

An environmental prevention strategy from colonial days: The local tavern owner made sure patrons minded their consumption of "ps" and "qs" (pints and quarts).

Individual approaches focus on helping people develop the knowledge, attitudes, and skills they need to change their behavior, while *environmental approaches* focus on creating an environment that makes it easier for people to act in healthy ways.

¹ Center for Substance Abuse Policy, CSAP's Prevention Pathways; pathwayscourses.samhsa.gov/ev/ev-2-pg3

Why are Environmental Prevention Strategies important?

Research and practice point to the tremendous potential of environmental approaches. Environmental prevention strategies 1) create a broader reach than individual strategies, 2) increase the potential sustainability of initiatives, 3) create long lasting effects, and 4) improve the cost efficiency of prevention efforts.

Without the backup of environmental strategies, programs targeting individual may find their effectiveness undercut by external pressures. For example, youth who have been taught the “life skills” to resist negative influences are better served if society also addresses the glamorization of alcohol use, the accessibility and acceptance of underage drinking, and the shortage of effective penalties for violators.²

Phase I Implementation

Phase I acknowledges that Arizona Community Methamphetamine Coalitions are at varying developmental stages: some are new and just planning their first meetings, some are organized and planning immediate actions that could occur and some are fully mature; i.e. broad community involvement, action plans developed and implemented, and sustained over a period of time.

During Phase I, Coalitions may be spending the next few months building their membership, engaging the community, assessing the needs and developing a strategic plan. The following deliverables are included in Phase I:

- (1) Developing and coordinating community coalitions with diverse representation which may include, but is not limited to, the following participants:
 - (a) Parent groups
 - (b) Law enforcement
 - (c) Education
 - (d) Healthcare
 - (e) Treatment professionals
 - (f) Prevention professionals
 - (g) Child welfare organizations
 - (h) Non-profit Organizations
 - (i) Faith based partners
 - (j) Government partners
 - (k) Community Members and Other local service providers
- (2) Action Plan (short term) for the Coalition that may include:
 - (a) Plans for engaging the community and growing the Coalition
 - (b) Plans for conducting a needs assessment
 - (c) Plans for sustainability; maintenance of coalitions over time, continued funding, diversity of membership, and plans for developing a strategic plan
- (3) Strategic Plan (Long Term) Based on the needs assessment and community priorities, the strategic plan will define the long-term direction for the Coalition.

Technical Assistance – Creating a learning community

Technical Assistance began with the Governor Napolitano’s and Attorney General Goddard’s February 2006 Conference on Addressing the Methamphetamine Crisis in Arizona – A Call to Action. Post Conference activities include two components:

² Pathwayscourses.samhsa.gov/ev/ev-1-pg5.htm

1. Coalition specific assistance based on the Coalitions needs; i.e. meeting planning and facilitation to support:
 - Engaging the Community
 - Creating a vision and action plan
 - Assessing Community Readiness
 - Completing a needs assessment
 - Developing the strategic plan
2. Statewide training / information dissemination includes:
 - Establishing a Statewide Communications method(s) among Coalitions.
 - Two statewide quarterly forums (during 2006) designed to provide information and skills training based on information that would be useful to all or most of the Coalitions

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